

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 08880 161316Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 OC-06 CCO-00 CAB-02
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01
FAA-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 ST-01 SY-05 OPR-02 A-01 AID-05 IGA-02
/100 W

----- 027461 /44

R 151637Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2538
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8880

ROME FOR RCAA/FAA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, LE, PFOR
SUBJECT: AMERICAN CARRIERS AT BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

REF: STATE 285839

1. AS ADDRE SEES AWARE, BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (BIA)
HAS BEEN FUNCTIONING FOR DAYLIGHT OPERATIONS NOW FOR SEVERAL
WEEKS, AND ON DEC 10 BEGAN LANDING CARGO FLIGHTS AT NIGHT.
OPERATIONS SO FAR HAVE BEEN WITHOUT SECURITY OR TECHNICAL
INCIDENT. SEVERAL AIRLINES ARE NOW FLYING REGULARLY TO
BEIRUT, INCLUDING MEA, AIR FRANCE, ALIA, KLM,
INTERFLUG, AND BEGINNING NEXT YEAR ALITALIA AND POSSIBLY BA.
INCREASINGLY, BEIRUT CIRCLES ARE ASKING US WHEN PANAM MIGHT REAPPEAR.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT RESUMPTION OF PANAM FLIGHTS TO BEIRUT
WILL DEPEND ON A NEW FAA CERTIFICATION OF BIA.

3. WE UNDERSTAND CONCERNS WHICH INFLUENCE PANAM'S
RELUCTANCE TO RESUME SERVICE. LEBANESE WATCHING FOR
SIGNS, SUCH AS INCREASE OF EMBASSY STAFF, RETURN OF
AMERICAN FIRMS, ETC., AS HEARTENING INDICATION OF RETURN
TO NORMALCY HERE. W OBVIOUSLY SHOULD NOT BE PRESSURED
INTO TAKING SUCH MOVES UNTIL SECURITY AND OTHER FACTORS
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SO WARRANT. ON OTHER HAND, WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT

RESUMPTION OF PANAM FLIGHTS HAS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE
IN EXCESS OF OTHER AIRLINES IN TERMS OF "CONFIDENCE
FACTOR" AMONG THE BODY POLITIC HERE. AS A CONSEQUENCE,
AND TO REPLY TO QUERIES, WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE FAA'S
CURRENT THINKING ON BIA AND PANAM'S THINKING ON RESUMPTION
OF OPERATIONS IN BEIRUT. WE ARE NOT READY TO PRESS
PANAM'S RETURN, BUT WE DO THINK TIME MAY BE
APPROACHING WHEN WE MAY WISH TO DO SO.
HOUGHTON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, AIRPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT08880
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760463-0199
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761238/aaaabgwz.tel
Line Count: 70
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 285839
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 APR 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN CARRIERS AT BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
TAGS: EAIR, PFOR, LE, PANAM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006